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lies in public opinion which expresses contempt for a lazy man who is constantly begging.

To anyone familiar with the definite social groupings of a tribe divided into clans or land-owning families, the ancestral family of the Bella Coola must appear as a vague and unreal unit, only distinguished by its intangibility. So it was found when investigating in the field. When information began to accumulate, it seemed as if there must be some definite obligations incumbent upon all members of the ancestral family, but none could be found. Without asking a direct question, the point was raised whether, if a man were killed, the members of his ancestral family would unite to avenge him. Conversely, were they liable for the deeds of any member? In each case the reply was in the negative; these matters concern only the immediate family. In regulating marriage the ancestral family is important, since it is wise for a man or woman to seek his mate within the members of that group, though it is not compulsory. Theoretically, the terms of kinship applied to members of the immediate family may be extended to members of the ancestral family, but in practice this is rarely the case, and, if so, is functionless. It might be argued that this somewhat wide application of kinship terms, verging on the classificatory usage, is a relic of an earlier, and now broken-down, clan system. It is impossible to prove or to deny such a contention. When trying to discover whether the members of an ancestral family ever contributed to a potlatch whereby one of their fellows established himself as a chief, the following interesting comment was received. The previous winter the informant had been in Bella Bella, and there the point was raised by a Bella Bella chief whom he quoted as follows:

"We laugh at you Bella Coola because each of you is always trying to be chief. Our system is much better; we all help our chiefs."

The man agreed with the Bella Bella man that there was an important difference between the practices of the two tribes.

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establish himself with the traditions of his new home. This is another illustration of the patrilineal tendency of the whole organization. 621 [614] [553]

Politically, the village is the most important Bella Coola unit. Usually, though not always related to one another, the inhabitants are always friends. If an attack is made on a village by a hostile war-party, all the inhabitants suffer equally. On the other hand, if the residents decide to attack another settlement, there is no compulsion for anyone to share the burden. Each individual, with the exception of slaves, follows his own inclination. In the case of murder or other wrong inflicted by an individual, the responsibility rests on his immediate family, not the village. Factions within the village seem to have been unimportant; individual jealousies were common, and often led to murder, but if a family became unpopular or considered itself aggrieved, it usually moved to another village. Neighbouring settlements were generally on friendly terms and often assisted each other in war, but this was not compulsory. Indeed, cases are known in which a war-party from the outer coast, about to attack *Sumt*, passed within a quarter of a mile of *Xemqɛ-ɬ* without its inhabitants even warning their threatened neighbours. [628] [582] [578] [627] [628]

As far as internal organization is concerned, the village is as fluid a unit as are most Bella Coola groupings. If one individual has attained a position of eminence through the potlatch system (vol. I, chap. IV), he is "chief" of the village, and his advice is generally followed. If several men have approximately the same importance, there is no dominating figure. In any case, a chief lacks executive authority, and such obedience as he receives is due to his personal influence. Some slight deference is paid to the man who uses the name of the eldest of the first group of settlers, the first chief, but this is not sufficient to warrant the title of "chief" with the significance usually attached to the term. The important members of the village are accustomed to meet for the discussion of ceremonial mat- 622 554 [536] 621 623 535 796

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as far as incest rules are concerned. In this particular instance the woman did not show any interest in her new relatives, failed to visit them, or to take part in their ceremonies, so that the adoption, though still legal, has practically lapsed. When this man dies his children will not consider the claims of their father's "sister" to inherit any of his possessions, as they would have done if she had showed herself appreciative of her adoption.

It will thus be seen that the size and composition of the family vary according to the wealth and influence of the father. The duties of the members are difficult to define since they concern almost entirely the routine of life. The father, head of the family, directs the gathering of firewood, repair of the house, obtaining of food supplies, and other matters of the same sort. If he gives a potlatch his children must help him, which they do willingly since they gain from the ceremony. If a father is too autocratic, his older, especially his married children, simply move away. Nor is his power over his younger children unbounded, since their mother's relatives take great interest in their welfare and would resent any ill-treatment.

If a person is killed or wounded, revenge is the affair of his family. Just how many individuals are involved depends on the composition of the family. In the case of the killing of a child, living with his parents alone, none but the father would feel it incumbent to retaliate. If an adult person is murdered, his or her brothers feel and avenge the insult. But should an important member of the community be slain, an old man surrounded by a numerous family, it is the affair of all. Every effort is made to slay the murderer, but if he should escape from the country, the injured group is satisfied by killing one of his family. Here again the same inexact composition is found. A man's son, brother, or father are the only persons strictly liable, and even here the common sense of the Bella Coola outweighs their theoretical laws. A murderer's brother, living in another village, would not be held liable; but more distant relatives living with the offender and considered as his

Family are liable.

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family are liable. It is very rare for a woman to be killed in a blood feud. A death is answered by a death; if two persons should be slain for one murder the family which has suffered the double loss endeavours to kill another of their enemies. In case of wounding, an effort is made to wound the offender, but if he should be killed his family would try to avenge him. More often, one of the offender's family takes the initiative of offering goods to the injured family, "to cure the wound." If the offer is accepted, and the goods delivered properly, the matter is at an end. If a murder be committed within the ranks of the immediate family, for instance, if a brother kill a brother, revenge, if exacted, must be meted out to the actual offender. If requested to do so, the leading chief of a village may offer his advice, but it is always considered that revenge concerns only the immediate family.

Revenge is a topic which shows clearly the essential fluidity of the family. There are no well-defined degrees of relationship within which responsibility rests. Instead, everyone knows, in the open life of the community, how many persons share the family life of the individual, and they alone are held to account, or they alone demand compensation. From its very nature, the family must be a bilateral unit which, when powerful, stretches out to absorb members of the ancestral families of both mother and father.

Not only does the family thus appear constantly to be attracting to itself members of the ancestral family of either parent, but these relatives themselves are deeply interested in the affairs of the family. This is most clearly shown in the case of children who, of course, are members of the ancestral family of both their mother and father. A few days after birth some relative is expected to call together the people of the village where the child is born for the bestowal and validation of an ancestral name. It is considered an evidence of poverty if this is done by the father, as if his child were only supported by his parents, not by a larger circle of relatives. It is immaterial whether this gathering be called by a relative

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He is especially rich in caribou-skins, used for foot covering, and goat-skins, so treasured for their wool.[1] He and his wife have laid up abundant food, and, most important of all, his wife's family is wealthy. Rumours have spread that X will soon give a potlatch and perhaps one or more foreign chiefs has given him a large cone-shaped whistle, such as is used in *nusk* ritual (see Plate 12). These whistles, called *qomo·ts*, are often referred to as the "breath" or "voice" of a chief; they are also called *sloptsta*, the "heart" or "wind" of a chief; a third designation is *nulwinuts*. X carefully conceals a whistle in one of his boxes. Such a present expresses the kindly feeling existing between those akin to one another in that they have risen to a position of eminence above the common crowd. Its receipt spurs a man to greater efforts to amass the wealth necessary for giving a potlatch by keeping before his eyes the realization of what another has done. A rival chief never gives such a present. X returns each whistle secretly at the time of his potlatch.

Early in the autumn X decides that he has almost enough wealth. To complete the essential amount he will not hesitate to borrow from his friends. It is most unusual to be refused, for it is incumbent on X, unless he wishes to lose the esteem of the community, to repay his borrowings with heavy interest, and when X distributes his goods at his potlatch it will be announced how he has obtained them, and the lender is proclaimed as a person of sufficient wealth to be able to spare some of it. Goods so loaned are termed "belt goods," a reference to the manner in which a man fastens up his cape with a belt before setting to work. The assumption is that X will have to labour to repay his indebtedness. Failure to repay is a serious matter, and the lender would be justified in seizing a canoe or other valuable article as surety for his debt; in fact, feuds are commonly caused by unpaid debts. Men of business

[1] Formerly, when goat-skin blankets were highly valued, goats were never shot for fear of the blood staining the wool. Instead, they were cornered by dogs, and choked to death in nooses. For presentation, each skin was laid out on the floor and then cut into longitudinal strips, two, three, or four fingers wide.

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services. None the less, one of their prized prerogatives, the visible embodiment of an element in their ancestral myth, is no longer present. In such circumstances, no member of an ancestral family would give a potlatch unless able to revive at it the dormant name in a new herald. The intending donor usually consults with the senior members of the ancestral family as to a suitable incumbent, or especially if he is an influential chief, he may simply use his own discretion. In either case, some relatively young member of the ancestral family is offered the post. If he accepts, the matter is settled; if not, another is invited in his stead. The new herald cannot function until his name and appointment have been validated by the distribution of presents at the potlatch. Such gifts are not returnable, since they are held to "have become nothing" for the name. Relatively lavish expenditure for this purpose is one of the many ways in which a chief is able to show his prowess and generosity. Thus established, a herald can carry out his duties thenceforth. He functions at every ceremonial, but especially at potlatches given by members of his own ancestral family, in whose origin myth his own name is embodied. From constant participation in all kinds of ceremonials, a herald becomes conversant with every type, and is appealed to as arbiter in difficult points of ritual, thus adding to his reputation.

Although acceptance of the post of herald somewhat curtails a man's activities in other respects, instances are known of energetic ones using the gifts received to establish themselves as chiefs, passing on their herald names at the same time to other incumbents. More often, a herald uses his wealth for the benefit of a son or other relative, being satisfied with his own status in the community. He takes a prominent part in every ceremony and is a person of some standing, yet is spared the responsibility of actually giving rites himself, a position which offers many attractions to a man lacking great ambition and initiative.

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pended, so that it serves as a visible and tangible memorandum of the chief-like generosity of its owner. By means of these media, debts are passed from one individual to another without actual liquidation in goods; in fact, it is unlikely that the Bella Coola possess sufficient money to meet the sums represented by their coppers.

Professional Prerogatives

The importance of prerogatives in the lives of the Bella Coola has already been noted in many connections. A man's name is his only because his ancestral family has the prerogative of using that designation; a *kusiut* dance can be performed only by an individual with the necessary prerogative; specific totem-pole designs, the portrayal of bird or animal on spoons, seats, house-posts, and other objects is a right dependent upon an ancestral prerogative; as is also the area on which a man can hunt or fish. The concept colours all Bella Coola life. Not only is a man's ceremonial life based on this principle, but on it depend his actions as chief, and the economic sources of his food-supply. No prerogative, even though it be the property of a man, is effective until validated by the distribution of presents. Much of a man's energy throughout life is expended on the validation and display of his prerogatives; most Bella Coola feuds are caused by the infringement of one individual on another's rights.

In addition to the various types already mentioned, there are a number of professional prerogatives on which depend a man's vocation. That of herald approximates this class, although the Bella Coola consider it rather as a right operative only during ceremonials. Professional prerogatives rest on the belief that a man's ability as a hunter, wood-worker, and so forth does not rest in his innate skill, but upon an inherited right which must be confirmed and validated by the distribution of presents. These can be given at any convenient time when the people have been called together, but, as it is to the man's advantage to have his right made known as widely

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provided with means of sustenance, a house, and certain supernatural powers. The right to the names of these people, as well as to the type of ceremonial objects used by them, has been the privilege of their descendants. But these early Bella Coola, like their modern descendants, had several designations, each carrying with it a definite prerogative. In a single myth there may be embodied a dozen or more names and incidents which are quoted at the present day to authorize such different phases of culture as dances, rights to hunting-grounds, professions, names of dogs, or *kusiut* prerogatives.[1] Any myth which gives the initial use of a name, a dance, or any other prerogative, is termed a *smaiusta*. Each of these is, or was in the old days, remembered with great care and never recounted in full detail except to the members of the ancestral family whose names are embodied in it. Even at potlatches the full details of the myth are not laid bare. Indeed, if a young man is of a flighty, garrulous disposition, unlikely to preserve the dignity of his ancestral fame, the details are concealed from him. Even at the present time there is much resentment at any unauthorized use of a *smaiusta*, and in the old days this would inevitably have led to bloodshed.

Boas (p. 116) states that the terms *smaiusta* and *sumsma* are synonymous. The writer feels certain that this is an error. It was discussed repeatedly with various Bella Coola, all of whom agreed that a *sumsma* is a mere story which can be told by anyone, whereas a *smaiusta* is a myth possessed by the individual, or individuals, whose prerogatives are derived from it. To the Bella Coola the two are utterly different.

None the less, there is no doubt that records of the past change from one category to the other. A wealthy chief, eager to give a potlatch, but lacking the mythical authorization, must frequently have used a *sumsma*, claiming the hero as an ancestor. There would be veiled amusement at him for doing so, but the prestige of one who can give potlatches is so great that in time his claim would probably be accepted. The two

[1] The details of these will be described later.

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584 preliminary agreement may have been made while they were only seven or eight years old, though marriage seldom occurs before the age of seventeen or eighteen. More often the agreement is made when X and Y have passed the age of puberty, and they wait for about two years before marrying.

583 425 553 [584] Throughout this period, X's relatives are expected to give at least one feast at which Y's relatives are the guests of honour, and always receive presents. At one of these rites X's father, with the concurrence of his relatives, may mark his approval of the coming event by bestowing on Y's father, or one of her other relations, an ancestral name from his family myth. This does not become the absolute property of Y's family, since the myth in which it is embodied does not belong to them, unless, of course, they are members of the same ancestral family. It is fitting that a name of this kind be bestowed by the recipient on one of Y's children, or returned to X's family a few generations later by a return marriage. If this is not done, in course of time the designation is apt to be regarded by Y's family as their own. If there are no children, Y's relatives should give back the name to X's [627] family, but there are many instances of feuds caused by failure to do so. According to mythology, prerogatives may sometimes [773] be given outright, without thought of their use by the resultant children, or of their being restored by return marriages. It is claimed that the people of the Kimsquit River [648] have, through such a present, the inalienable title to use a certain spot in the Kitlobe River for their olachen nets, and likewise the Kitlobe people have an irrevocable right to the Kimsquit name *Sūlhmy*. These two prerogatives were transferred at the beginning of time. At present, anyone bestowing outright his family prerogatives would be considered weak-minded and the other members of the ancestral family would [578] strenuously object. Considerations of this sort make it desirable to seek a wife within the ranks of the ancestral family.

During the period of engagement, Y's family may present a name, or names, to X's father, with the same conditions as those just described.

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old man came back to Bella Coola with his son, a man about twenty-five years of age. During his absence all his relatives had died, and he was forgotten. He went to the house of a man with whom his ancestors had intermarried generations ago, explained who he was, and was welcomed. The old man and his son have since lived there, although it is doubtful if the owner of the house had ever heard of their existence, and the son cannot even speak the Bella Coola language.

X and Y themselves are not entirely overlooked in the exchange of presents between their two families. If Y's father is well pleased with his son-in-law he may show this not only publicly, which redounds to his own credit, but by the communication of secret lore such as a special number of nights for ceremonial chastity. Conversely, if Y should not be a *kusiut*, her father-in-law often asks her father's permission to make her a member of that society. The woman's father is naturally pleased and makes no objections; so she is initiated, using a name and prerogative embodied in her husband's family. Commonly too, they give her one of their ancestral names at any convenient ceremony later than the wedding. In conformity with the rules already explained, if Y should die childless the names return to X's relatives, but if there are children they pass to them. It is said that *sisaok* names can never be transferred in this manner.

Y's father and other relatives continue to take an interest in her ceremonial welfare and in her personal comfort. If X beats or otherwise abuses her, they expostulate; and if his cruelty becomes unbearable they shelter their daughter when she runs away from her husband. If X should murder Y, she would be revenged by her family. Only one instance of this was known, when the murderer avoided his pursuers by fleeing from the country. As a rule a wife is fairly well treated, though this depends on the character of the husband, the importance of her relatives, and the amount of goods expended to validate the marriage. Among slaves and persons of no influence, it is assumed that a husband may sell his wife as a

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567 ceremony usually consisted simply of the man and woman
588 living together. In theory, this prevented the children from ever obtaining a name or other prerogative embodied in the ancestral myth of the free-born parent, and an effort was always made to conceal from them the details of the ancestral family's origin myth. But, as already described in the section dealing with slaves, the expenditure of valuable presents served to eradicate, or at least to cover, the blot. If the child succeeded in giving many potlatches, the stain was generally forgotten. On the other hand, if the child of a slave married to a free man was not "washed," he could always be shamed by a reminder of the disgrace of his parents' wedding.

682 In case of murder, the son or other near relative of the
583 victim sometimes accepts a daughter or other member of the
627 offender's family instead of exacting blood revenge. The bride is delivered to her husband with valuable goods "to wash away the blood," but these never suffice entirely to remove the disgrace from her or her children. The latter may inherit names and prerogatives from their father, but even if they attain to the position of chiefs, they can always be put to shame by reference to their mother's marriage as an atonement for murder. Of course the influence of a great chief makes it impolitic to refer to his ancestry, and there are a few instances of men having reached such a position of eminence that the blot has been practically forgotten. The wife's family must continue to give presents to the husband for years after marriage, otherwise her lot is unenviable indeed, and her children have the status of the unwashed offspring of a slave and a free-man. In some cases a marriage of this type is entered upon years after a murder, if a son or other descendant wishes to end the anxiety of constantly expecting blood revenge.

REPURCHASE OF THE WIFE

556 Repurchase of a wife is the necessary consequence of every
583 reputable Bella Coola marriage. It is assumed that the pre-

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not yet been repurchased in 1924 and the Bella Coola were beginning to look askance at her. It is doubtful whether the child realized that she was married, certainly the fact had not the slightest effect on her behaviour. Unless the wife is rebought, any names which she took to her husband at her fictitious marriage remain his property.

Ceremonial marriages are sometimes carried out for special reasons. If the husband at a real marriage feels that he is over-indebted to his wife's relatives through the names and prerogatives they have brought him, he sometimes arranges to restore some of these and thus even the transaction by ceremonially marrying one of his young female relatives to one of his wife's family. She takes back some of the acquired names to her fictitious husband and the matter is amicably arranged. Realizing the difficulties experienced by the father of many daughters, one of his sons-in-law may, if his father-in-law has many times rebought his daughter and so demonstrated his nobility, try to arrange a fictitious marriage between the old man and one of his son-in-law's relatives. It often happens that the proud old chief will decline such assistance, confident in his own ability and prestige. Revenge is often settled by a fictitious marriage, arranged in the same manner and with the same attached stigma as that already described. Sometimes the infant is ceremonially married to the son of a chief, instead of to the chief himself, though no true wedlock follows.

It is not even necessary to have a small girl to act as bride. If a man wishes to ally himself by marriage to a famous chief and lacks a daughter, he can perform the marriage rite with a "bride" consisting of his finger, leg, hand, or other part of the body. In a case in 1915 the "wife" was a favourite dog, which was duly married to a chief. In fact, ceremonial marriage is merely one of the many methods used by the Bella Coola to enter into financial dealings with an influential chief; it provides an honourable means of displaying the wealth of the bride's family; it increases the prestige of a girl and her relatives, or the prestige of her relatives alone if "she" is an inani-

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CHAPTER III

WARFARE[1]

General Observations — Specific Accounts

General Observations

721 PRIOR to the establishment of British rule, there was con-
648 siderable warfare among the coastal tribes of British Columbia. Long-continued struggles leading to the extermination of one or other of the participants were unknown, but there were constant raids, counter-raids, forays, and attacks. These were never as continuous as on the Plains, where martial achievements were regarded more highly than on the coast, but it appears probable that at least several villages of the Bella Coola were embroiled every few years. Nevertheless,
[796] war was secondary in importance to ceremonial rites. During the winter, peace reigned and members of hostile tribes were
[556] even received as guests at some dances. At potlatches they might be subjected to insult, later to be avenged in the same manner or by active hostility, but seldom was actual violence offered either to envoys or guests. The symbol of peace and
726 friendliness was eagle down; the occupants of a canoe who
825 bore an invitation to a potlatch, or who were guests them-
778 selves, used to blow this substance up into the air whenever
[486] another craft approached, and it was incumbent on the latter
[578] to veer over to the other side of the channel. Eagle down was considered to be so sacred that when two men were quarrelling
[627] a chief could stop them by blowing some of it over their heads.
721 In winter, hostilities were prevented by ceremonies, and in summer the people were usually busy laying in supplies of food; consequently, it was only in the late spring that fighting was
[575] at all common. Even then the dictates of ceremonial life were
[622] not entirely forgotten; no *kusiut* novice went to war and

[1] Warfare having long been discontinued, the past tense is used throughout this chapter.